

TOWN OF MANSFIELD
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Minutes of the December 20, 2006 Meeting
Conference Room B, Audrey P. Beck Building

Present: Peter Drzewiecki, Jennifer Kaufman, Quentin Kessel (acting chair), Scott Lehmann and Frank Trainor.
Absent: Robert Dahn and John Silander.
Town Staff: IWA agent Grant Meitzler.
Guests: Mayor Betsy Paterson; Town Manager Matt Hart; Louis G. Marquet, Leyland Alliance; Tom Cody, Robinson and Cole (legal counsel for Leyland Alliance); Michael Klemens, environmental consultant; Cynthia van Zelm, Mansfield Downtown Partnership; Geoff Fitzgerald, BL Companies (Civil Engineer); Jason Coite, UConn Office of Environmental Policy; and Edward Wazer, resident.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM.
2. It was agreed to depart from the order of the agenda in order to first discuss storm-water management for the proposed Storrs Downtown development, since the majority of the guests attended in response to CC questions about how storm-water management for this project would maintain the environment of the major vernal pool on the property.

Mr. Cody introduced Dr. Klemens, who proceeded to outline protections proposed for the critical natural resources within the property. These include two streams that eventually feed the Fenton River, a vernal pool, and forest land adjacent to existing Joshua's Trust land. The general strategy is to isolate the development from open space, so that (a) pollutants from the development do not flow into open space and (b) animals from open space are deterred from entering the development:

a, The topography is such that the watershed of the vernal pool does not include any of the area to be developed. Surface runoff from the developed area that would otherwise flow into the two streams will be diverted into a system of hydrodynamic separators, filter basins, catch basins, and porous holding tanks that gradually release cleaned water into the ground; the capacity of this system will be 5 acre-feet.

b. Dr. Klemens described the developed area as a "sink" for amphibians; once in the developed area, they were unlikely to survive for an extended time. A one-foot-high barrier curb will deter amphibians and other small wildlife from entering the developed area. .

The CC noted that many of the components of the water handling system will require regular maintenance and asked who would be responsible for maintenance and oversight. Mr. Marquet responded that the system will be constructed by the developer, after approval by the IWA and the PZC. Over time, the property owners association will

assume responsibility for the system. Ms. Van Zelm added that several agreements will have to be executed in order to make clear what entities are responsible for various aspects of the development, including the stormwater management system.

After the discussion, a majority of the guests left and the CC resumed the usual order of the agenda.

3. The minutes of the November 15, 2006, meeting, as revised by Lehmann, were approved unanimously on a motion by Kessel, seconded by Lehmann.

4. Kessel reported that the Town Council had acted positively on the CC's request for an ordinance permitting appointment of two alternate members to the Commission. Kaufman spoke of the increasing responsibilities of her position with the Town; she felt that it was appropriate for her to step down from the CC in the near future. The CC reviewed the process appointing new members: following attendance at a regular CC meeting by the prospective new member, the CC forwards any positive recommendations to the Town Manager, who has the authority to make appointments.

5. IWA Referral.

IWA1369 - Szymkowicz - 198 Browns Road. Map date: 11/14/06 revision. This application is for a gazebo and landscaping within the 150 foot regulated area adjacent to wetlands. No work is proposed in the wetlands. Trainor moved, and Drzewiecki seconded, that there should be no significant negative impact on the wetlands as long as appropriate erosion and sedimentation controls are in place during the construction and removed after the site is stabilized. The motion passed unanimously.

6. PZC Referral.

PZC File #907-29- Proposed revisions to the Zoning Map and Zoning regulations were reviewed and discussed. These revisions would change the current Industrial and Professional Office-3 zones in the southern part of Mansfield to a Pleasant Valley Design District that would permit multifamily housing. It is estimated that the new district would permit construction of approximately 400 housing units. If approved, the PZC would have the right to require that up to 50 percent of the prime agricultural acreage in a given parcel be permanently preserved for agricultural use.

Kessel reported on the OSPC recommendations and reviewed the position of the Mansfield Agricultural Committee; both of these advisory committees oppose the zone change. The CC could not discern a clear rationale for the proposed change. The new authority to require preserving 50% of prime agricultural land is welcome but need not be tied to a zoning change from industrial to residential that is likely to have a negative tax impact. It was agreed that the secretary should draft a CC statement for the January 2, 2007 public hearing on the zone change. The statement is to note that the CC fails to see a rationale for the proposed zoning change and instead urges that the proposed provisions to protect up to 50 percent of the prime farmland be added to the current

industrial and office zones. The statement is to be circulated and voted on by email before being forwarded to the PZC.

7. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Quentin Kessel
Secretary